

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED



Symbol of Quality

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1974-75 REPORT

July 1, 1974 - June 30, 1975

Accreditation by the National Accreditation Council signifies that an agency or school meets nationally accepted standards for ethical fund-raising, responsible management and quality services to blind and visually handicapped persons.

Involvement and Outreach

by Daniel D. Robinson, *President*

This year I retire from the presidency of the National Accreditation Council. For me the past few months have been a time for reviewing my associations with NAC and the progress I have seen NAC make. It has also been a time for looking ahead — dreaming a little about NAC's future.

If this seems rather personal, I can only say that I have and will continue to have a deep personal commitment to NAC and everything it stands for. That is why I want to take this opportunity to say some things I believe should be said at this time.

First, a little background.

In 1964 Arthur L. Brandon asked me to join a Committee on Standards for Financial Accounting and Service Reporting for agencies serving the blind and visually handicapped. The committee was one of the task forces of a national ad hoc Commission on Standards and Accreditation of Services for the Blind (COMSTAC). Arthur, a former vice president of New York University, was chairman of COMSTAC.

As a citizen and a certified public accountant, I was already aware of the great need for better accounting practices and public disclosure of the financial condition of all agencies and schools that seek either tax or contributed support. I was willing to do what I could to help.

Later I learned how uneven services for the blind could be. And, unfortunately, too many citizens were supporting these services "blindly."

COMSTAC completed its work in 1966. A permanent organization was set up in 1967 to keep the standards up to date, develop new standards as needed, and administer a system of accreditation through which agencies and schools would utilize the standards for continuing improvement. That organization is NAC.

In 1969 I was glad to accept an invitation to join NAC's Board. Since then I have been privileged to serve as NAC's treasurer, as a vice president, and, for the past two years, as president.

I have seen the number of accredited agencies grow from none to 57. Almost 200,000 men, women and children — 30,000 more than last year — in 140 communities of 37 states and the District of Columbia benefit from accredited services provided through 167 separate installations. About half receive rehabilitation services and half prevention of blindness services.

No other accrediting organization I know of has accredited a higher proportion of potentially accreditable units in its first eight years.

In addition, 12 workshops have qualified for certification from the General Council of Workshops for the Blind, using NAC standards. Thirty agencies

are in the midst of self-studies and 13 are planning them. Five have had accreditation refused; six are currently deferred. About 100 are corresponding with NAC about applying the standards.

NAC was the first accrediting body in the field of special education to receive official recognition from the U.S. Commissioner of Education as a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training offered by educational institutions.

Leading organizations of and for blind people publicly sponsored and supported NAC.

Clearly, when I became NAC's president in 1973, NAC was widely respected and moving steadily ahead.

What have we tried to do in the past two years?

If it could be summed up in two words, I think those words would be INVOLVEMENT and OUTREACH.

Many concerned organizations and individuals have cooperated with NAC. We have tried to find, with them, ways in which they can become even more effectively involved. We have also tried, with their help, to reach out to still others.

In particular we have sought ways to involve more blind persons and organizations of blind persons. Of course blind persons and organizations representing them helped to found NAC and have worked with it. Now we have specific policies and procedures to increase this involvement.

The new involvement extends from additional members on NAC's Board right through the revision of standards and participation in the self-studies and on-site reviews of agencies seeking accreditation. The response has strengthened NAC's whole program.

Now for the future. How can standards applied through accreditation bring about even better services for blind people? I believe involvement and outreach will continue to strengthen this effort.

NAC now has a staff member with prime responsibility for helping more agencies and schools use the standards. Involvement and outreach of all concerned persons and groups will be needed if he is to succeed.

For the protection of tax and contributed funds and of the right of blind people to develop their capabilities to the fullest, objective standards of management and programs are needed, should be utilized, and people should know there are such standards.

To increase this use and public knowledge is the challenge to NAC in the coming years.

With its growing number of accredited agencies, with its strong Sponsors, Supporters and friends, and with the leadership of our incoming president, I know NAC will meet the challenge.

Consumers

If all blind persons are to achieve their fullest potential as self-reliant participating citizens, agencies and schools for the blind must offer quality services. That is why, as President Robinson has noted, blind persons and their organizations helped to found NAC and have always worked with NAC.

In 1974, discussions with leading organizations of the blind—the American Council of the Blind (ACB), the Blind Veterans Association (BVA), and the National Federation of the Blind (NFB)—resulted in suggestions for strengthening this involvement.

In view of these suggestions, NAC's members voted that at least one-third of NAC's directors henceforth should be members of or recommended by national organizations of blind or other visually handicapped persons. Also that these organizations be asked to suggest qualified candidates whenever vacancies occur on the Board or Commissions.

In February 1975, thanks to recommendations from ACB and BVA, a slate of seven distinguished candidates was presented to bring the Board to its peak membership. All were elected. Thus at present 18 of NAC's 35 directors are blind.

According to NFB's president, NFB made no recommendations because NAC's members did not agree to NFB's demand for a predetermined quota of

"representatives" who would be elected to NAC's Board but accountable to NFB. ACB and BVA made it clear that quotas of any sort were unacceptable. They also noted that board members of any organization are accountable under law to that organization and cannot, as board members, be responsible to some other group.

NAC continues to invite NFB to participate in all its activities on the same basis as others and hopes it will.

Further steps toward greater consumer input were taken. They include: interviews with local consumers during on-site visits to agencies seeking accreditation; getting help from consumers in upgrading agency services by encouraging agencies to involve consumers in self-studies and to share with them NAC's suggestions for improvement; obtaining consumer suggestions of qualified persons for NAC's national roster of potential on-site team members; inviting national organizations of the blind to join in the review and revision of each set of standards.

NAC's policy is to seek maximum cooperation from all groups that share its objectives. As this policy is carried out, new ways are found to involve not only consumers but many other groups from the great general public to which any accrediting organization is ultimately responsible.

Outcomes

The purpose of applying objective standards through a system of accreditation is to improve services and to safeguard public tax and contributed funds expended for those services. To what extent is NAC achieving this dual purpose?

In April 1975 NAC published the report of an in-depth study which sought answers to this question.

The 67-page report, *Strengthening Services For the Blind and Visually Handicapped Through the Application of Standards*, and a summary inserted in the *Congressional Record* by Congressman John Brademas show that all methods used to evaluate the impact of NAC's efforts support one conclusion: use of the standards in the manner proposed by NAC does bring about recognizable improvements in services as well as in agency management and accountability.

Some examples of frequently made improvements:

Premises were made safer and barrier-free; better safety procedures were set up.

Modern accounting and reporting procedures were installed to safeguard funds and provide for full financial disclosure.

Better records and coordination of services

assured that blind people would not be "lost" between various departments of large agencies.

Agencies involved more users of services in planning, evaluation, and service delivery.

The report tends to confirm that agencies that have qualified for accreditation are not content to remain "good" agencies; the process stimulates them to become better. Their own self-studies and the recommendations of the Commission on Accreditation combine to highlight areas where improvements can be, should be, and subsequently are made by them.

The report also points out that meeting the standards is not easy. Many agencies need much advice and assistance in making the necessary improvements; some even fear to try.

NAC's response to agencies' needs has been to assign, in the new fiscal year, a staff member to assist these agencies.

Meanwhile, the study has revealed that for the first time in the field of services to the blind a quarter of all known agencies have been stimulated to undertake a continuous process of upgrading their operations to do a better job of serving blind and visually handicapped Americans.

Statement of Support, Revenue, and Expenses and Changes in Fund Balances

Year Ended June 30, 1975

	Current Funds		
	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted
Public support and revenue:			
Contributions	\$195,681	\$194,285	\$ 1,396
Revenue:			
Assessments and dues, member units	18,943	18,943	
Interest	10,461	10,461	
Publication sales	2,626	2,626	
Total revenue	32,030	32,030	
Grants from governmental agencies	51,450		51,450
Total public support and revenue	\$279,161	226,315	52,846
Expenses:			
Program services:			
Develop standards	\$ 56,014	55,768	246
Promulgate standards	54,017	2,567	51,450
Accreditation	62,640	62,640	
Total program services	172,671	120,975	51,696
Supporting services:			
Management and general	63,224	62,074	1,150
Fund raising	52,475	52,475	
Total supporting services	115,699	114,549	1,150
Total expenses	\$288,370	235,524	52,846
Excess of expenses over public support and revenue		(9,209)	—
Fund balances:			
Beginning of year		128,955	
End of year		\$119,746	\$ -0-

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Notes to Financial Statements — June 30, 1975

1—Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Investments are stated at cost.

Pledges of contributions are recognized in the accompanying statements as they are received.

Expenditures for fixed assets are not capitalized and depreciated over the useful lives of the assets acquired, but are charged directly to expense. The amounts involved in fixed asset transactions are not significant.

All contributions are considered available for unrestricted use, unless specifically restricted by the donor.

No amounts for donated materials or services have been reflected in the accompanying financial statements. The amount of donated materials is not significant and no objective basis is available to measure the value of donated services.

2—Board-Designated Long-Term Investment

In prior years, the Board designated funds in the aggregate amount of \$108,989 for long-term investment, and such funds were reported in prior years' financial statements in a separate fund group entitled "funds functioning as endowment." In accordance with the revised standards of reporting for voluntary health and welfare organizations, adopted since its last report, the Council is now reporting such funds as a part of current funds—unrestricted.

On June 30, 1975, the investment consisted of a \$100,000, 5% First National City Bank certificate of deposit maturing on July

17, 1975. It is the intention of the Council to reinvest the proceeds of this certificate upon maturity.

3—Restricted Revenues

Restricted revenues totaled \$52,846 for the year ended June 30, 1975. Of this amount, \$51,450 was received from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to be used for the strengthening of services for the visually handicapped and \$1,396 was received from various donors to defray the cost of meetings and conferences.

4—Pension Plan

The Council participates in the National Health and Welfare Association pension plan, the costs of which are borne by the employer. The plan covers all employees over 25 years of age with more than one year of service. The total expense to the Council for the year ended June 30, 1975 was \$9,445. There are no prior service costs. A contribution of \$11,800 was also made to a special retirement account for a former executive director.

5—Leased Premises

The minimum rental under the lease for the Council's office space is \$15,000 per annum (commencing March 1, 1975), excluding payments for real estate taxes and utilities. The prior lease was at \$18,000 per annum. Such rental costs aggregated approximately \$20,000 for the year ended June 30, 1975. The present lease expires on June 30, 1978.

Statement of Functional Expenses

Year Ended June 30, 1975

	Total	Program Services			Supporting Services	
		Standards			Management and General	Fund Raising
		Develop	Promulgate	Accreditation		
Salaries	\$167,026	\$36,746	\$33,405	\$43,427	\$15,032	\$38,416
Employee health and retirement benefits (Note 4)	26,001	3,124	2,840	3,693	13,078	3,266
Payroll taxes	8,094	1,781	1,619	2,104	728	1,862
Total salaries and related expenses	201,121	41,651	37,864	49,224	28,838	43,544
Occupancy	19,885	4,375	3,977	5,170	1,790	4,573
Telephone and telegraph	5,937	1,191	1,239	1,371	935	1,201
Conferences, conventions, meetings and travel	28,863	5,760	5,195	4,395	13,440	73
Professional fees and contract service payments	15,155		200		14,955	
Equipment and other fixed assets	410		40	23	338	9
Outside printing, art work, etc.	5,871	703	2,990	305	1,079	794
Postage and shipping	2,852	849	513	536	374	580
Subscriptions and reference publications	220	83	50		43	44
Membership dues	491		223		138	130
Supplies	7,148	1,394	1,518	1,609	1,119	1,508
Miscellaneous	417	8	208	7	175	19
Total functional expenses	<u>\$288,370</u>	<u>\$56,014</u>	<u>\$54,017</u>	<u>\$62,640</u>	<u>\$63,224</u>	<u>\$52,475</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Balance Sheet

June 30, 1975

Assets

Current funds — unrestricted:	
Cash	
(including \$8,989 designated by the Board for long-term investment)	\$ 24,385
Accounts receivable	1,878
Pledges receivable	1,750
Prepaid expenses	4,580
Board designated long-term investment (Note 2)	100,000
Total current funds — unrestricted	<u>\$132,593</u>

Liabilities and Fund Balances

Current funds — unrestricted:	
Accounts payable	\$ 1,972
Deferred revenue	<u>10,875</u>
Fund balances:	
Designated by the governing Board for long-term investment	108,989
Undesignated for general activities	<u>10,757</u>
Total fund balances	<u>119,746</u>
Total current funds — unrestricted	<u>\$132,593</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

To the Board of Directors
National Accreditation Council
for Agencies Serving the
Blind and Visually Handicapped
New York, New York

We have examined the balance sheet of National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped as of June 30, 1975 and the related statements of support, revenue, and expenses and changes in fund balances and of functional expenses for the year then ended. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and accordingly included such tests of the accounting records and such other auditing procedures as we considered New York, N.Y., July 31, 1975

necessary in the circumstances.

In our opinion, the financial statements identified above present fairly the financial position of National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped at June 30, 1975, and the results of its operations and the changes in its fund balances for the year then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding period.

HURDMAN AND CRANSTOWN, *Certified Public Accountants*

Toward Greater Outreach

by Richard W. Bleecker, *Executive Director*

NAC's first executive director, Alexander F. Handel, worked closely with NAC's Board and other friends to lay a firm foundation for NAC's future growth as a voluntary organization pioneering in constructive social change. We warmly acknowledge our debt to Alex as we move toward even greater outreach and involvement of still more volunteers.

Who are these volunteers?

First, they are the leaders of more than 100 agencies and schools in all parts of our country who worked and are working to apply the standards to their operations. They can testify that the process of agency self-study and evaluation is a demanding but stimulating exercise that helps produce meaningful results. They have shown their willingness to stand up and be counted in the cause of better services through higher standards.

Then there are the volunteers on the on-site teams. Each visit to an agency seeking accreditation takes about four days. Yet more than 300 busy people have donated their time for this service. 78 in the

past year alone. Many agree to serve again and again because of their commitment to standards of quality.

To keep the standards themselves up to date hundreds of men and women are sharing their professional and personal experiences with our national and local reviews of the standards.

These volunteers include also the national and state organizations that have chosen to stand up and be publicly counted as Sponsoring Members or Supporters. They are organizations of consumers, professionals in the field, specialists in related fields, and citizen groups.

And always we rely on the day-in, day-out leadership of the more than two score men and women on NAC's Board and Commissions.

The use of standards in a national system of accreditation is improving and will continue to improve services for the blind because so many thousands of volunteers are working with and through NAC to make it happen.

Comments

"As in all standard-setting and accreditation processes, the self-study and site-visit activities are providing the catalysts for important improvements in education for visually handicapped children. There are many testimonials to this from accredited schools and from those which are assessing their own readiness to apply for accreditation. If NAC did not exist it would have to be created."

FERNE K. ROBERTS, *President*
Association for Education of
the Visually Handicapped

"Through the efforts of NAC, there has been an upgrading of programs serving the blind and visually handicapped that has yielded important results for handicapped citizens."

HON. JOHN BRADEMAS, *Chairman*
Subcommittee on Select Education
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

Resolutions

"...resolved that The Division for the Visually Handicapped of the Council for Exceptional Children endorse the goals, objectives, structure and continuous self-evaluation of the National Accreditation Council and ... urge agencies and residential schools providing services for blind persons ... to seek accreditation by the National Accreditation Council."

From a resolution adopted at the
1974 National Convention

Council for Exceptional Children

"...resolved that the American Association of Workers for the Blind hereby express support for all agencies which wish to apply for accreditation [by NAC], and further, urge them to apply for accreditation forthwith."

From Resolution 1, adopted at the
1975 Biennial Convention
American Association of Workers
for the Blind

Suggested Form of Bequest

I give and bequeath to the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped, Inc., a nonprofit corporation located in New York, N.Y., the sum of _____ dollars (\$ _____) to be used by the Council's Board of Directors as deemed advisable within the corporate powers of such Council.

Suggested Form of Gift

I hereby give to the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped, Inc., a nonprofit corporation located in New York, N.Y., the sum of _____ dollars (\$ _____) to be used for the general purposes of the Council at the direction of its Board of Directors.

Commission on Accreditation

As one of NAC's two operating arms, the Commission on Accreditation decides whether applicants shall be accredited (for a full five years or a shorter period), deferred until improvements are made, or refused accreditation. The Commission also develops policies and procedures for carrying out the accreditation process.

In the past year two agencies received the public recognition of accreditation for the first time, one was reinstated, and 13 qualified for reaccreditation. Comprehensive statistics appear in the president's report.

Accredited agencies include rehabilitation centers, a dog guide school, workshops, libraries, publishing facilities, and special schools. Nine are state rehabilitation agencies providing statewide services.

Members of the Commission in the period covered by this report were:

JACK W. BIRCH, Professor
University of Pittsburgh, School of Education
Pittsburgh, Penna.
Chairperson

FREDERICK A. SILVER, Director
Division of Services for the Blind
Indiana Rehabilitation Services
Indianapolis, Ind.
Vice-Chairperson

NATALIE C. BARRAGA, Professor
Department of Special Education
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas

HOWARD H. HANSON, Asst. Program Administrator
Office of Service to the Visually Impaired
Division of Rehabilitation Service
Pierre, S.D.

MILTON A. JAHODA, Executive Director
Cincinnati Association for the Blind
Cincinnati, Ohio

RUTH KAARLELA, Assistant Director
Program for Training Rehabilitation Teachers
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Mich.

ELIZABETH M. MALONEY
Assistant Executive Director for Services
The Industrial Home for the Blind
Brooklyn, N.Y.

LOUIS H. RIVES, JR., Research Director
Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind
Little Rock, Ark.

AUSTIN G. SCOTT, Executive Director
Dallas County Association for the Blind
Dallas, Texas

Commission on Standards

Charged with the development and updating of the standards NAC administers, the Commission is one of NAC's two operating arms.

The Commission is conducting a systematic review of each set of standards with the goal of completing at least two sets each year.

In 1974-75 *Standards for Physical Facilities* were revised and published; *Standards for Vocational Services* were revised and have been published as this report goes to press. In addition, reviews of *Standards for Workshops* and *Standards of Accounting for Services and Finances* are under way, as is a special study of Standards for Mobility Instructors.

Priorities are determined by the extent of the technological and social change that has occurred since the standards were originally adopted and reports of experience in applying them.

Members of the Commission in the period covered by this report were:

GERALDINE T. SCHOLL
Professor of Special Education
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Mich.
Chairperson

WILLIAM T. COPPAGE, Director
Virginia Commission for the Visually Handicapped
Richmond, Va.
Vice-Chairperson

JOHN M. CRANDELL, JR., Associate Professor
Department of Educational Psychology
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

CLEO B. DOLAN, Executive Director
The Cleveland Society for the Blind
Cleveland, Ohio

J. ARTHUR JOHNSON, Consultant
Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind
Washington, D.C.

DURWARD K. McDANIEL, National Representative
American Council of the Blind
Washington, D.C.

ROBERT MORRIS, Director
Gerontological Policy Institute
Brandeis University
Waltham, Mass.

DONALD H. WEDEWER, Chief
Bureau of Blind Services
Tallahassee, Fla.

MRS. HELEN W. WORDEN, Executive Director
Rhode Island Association for the Blind
Providence, R.I.

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Executive Director*

RICHARD W. BLEECKER, Ed.D.

*Member, Council of Specialized Accrediting Agencies.
Member, President's Committee on Employment of
the Handicapped.*

*NAC is a not-for-profit organization supported by con-
tributions, grants and dues.*

Contributions to NAC are tax deductible.

National Accreditation Council
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*As of June 30, 1975

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